

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01  
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /101 W  
-----040170 241518Z /64

R 241408Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2773  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NY  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
USMISSION NATO  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5428

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E. O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR PGOV BE IS EEC  
SUBJ: SIMONET VISIT TO ISRAEL

REF.: TEL AVIV 4491 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. BELGIN EMBASSY HAS DESCRIBED TO US THE  
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CONSTRUCTIVE AND CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE IN TALKS BETWEEN  
BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HENRI SIMONET AND MEMBERS OF  
THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN FOCUSED  
ON EXPLAINING ISRAEL'S POSITIONS, MODERATED HIS CRITICISM  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AND GAVE THE IMPRESSION  
THAT THE GOI IS TAKING A SLIGHTLY MORE POSITIVE VIEW  
OF EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SIMONET

APPEARS TO HAVE LEFT WITH MORE UNDERSTANDING FOR ISRAEL'S POSITION AND LESS CONVICTION OF ISRAELI INFLEXIBILITY. END SUMMARY

2. POLOFF REVIEWED THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED SIMONET VISIT TO ISRAEL WITH BELGIAN EMBASSY OFFICER (LEROY) WHO DESCRIBED THE MEETINGS AS CORDIAL AND PLEASANT AND SAID EACH SIDE HAD MADE A SINCERE EFFORT TO BE OBJECTIVE AND TO DISREGARD PAST DIFFICULTIES. SIMONET WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED, ACCORDING TO LEROY, WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN, WHO TOOK A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE VISIT AND WHO CAREFULLY AND CONVINCINGLY EXPLAINED TO SIMONET ISRAEL'S POSITIONS REGARDING THE PEACE PROCESS.

3. BOTH SIDES HAD EXPECTED THE VISIT TO BE RATHER DIFFICULT IN LIGHT OF ISRAELI ANGER OVER SIMONET'S JAN 18 NOTE TO DAYAN ASKING FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BOUNDARIES AND SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. THE BELGIANS WERE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED WHEN DAYAN, AT A DINNER THE FIRST EVENING, DEPARTED FROM THE TEXT OF A TOAST WHICH WAS TO HAVE BEEN INFLAMMATORY (THE BELGIANS HAD BEEN GIVEN A COPY IN ADVANCE) AND INSTEAD DELIVERED A FRIENDLY SPEECH INDICATING A MORE OPEN-MINDED ISRAELI ATTITUDE TOWARD EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE AREA. LEROY WAS NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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CERTAIN WHETHER THIS WAS MERELY A POLITE GESTURE OR SIGNALLED A NEW OUTLOOK ON THE PART OF JERUSALEM. LEROY SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE MEETING WITH BEGIN WAS LESS SATISFACTORY AND THAT THE PM EXHIBITED LESS FLEXIBILITY.

4. ACCORDING TO LEROY, SIMONET, WHO MET ALSO WITH PRESIDENT KATZIR, DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN, KNESSET SPEAKER SHAMIR, AND LABOR PARTY EX-MINISTERS RABIN AND PERES (WITH WHOM SIMONET HAS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AND SEES EVERY YEAR IN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL), CAME TO ISRAEL BASICALLY ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW. SIMONET CAME IN HIS CAPACITY AS BELGIUM'S FOREIGN MINISTER. HE HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED TO MAKE THE VISIT LAST FALL AS PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL. ALTHOUGH AWARE THAT HE PLANS TO PRESENT HIS FINDINGS TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL NEXT MONTH, THE GOI PREFERRED NOT TO RECOGNIZE THAT HE SPOKE UNOFFICIALLY FOR EUROPE.

5. LEROY CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS THAT SIMONET FEELS, IN LIGHT OF HIS VISIT HERE, THAT THERE IS "ENOUGH

FLEXIBILITY IN ISRAEL TO RENDER THE RESUMPTION OF  
TALKS WITH EGYPT POSSIBLE" AND THAT DURING THE COURSE

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OF THE TALKS HE "DISCARDED HIS ADMONITORY MANTLE AND  
CONCEDED THAT SOME OF THE CRITICISM HE AND HIS FELLOW  
LEADERS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY HAD VOIDED AGAINST  
ISRAEL IN RECENT TIMES MIGHT HAVE BETRAYED A LACK OF  
BALANCE."

6. ACCORDING TO LEROY, SIMONET, IN PRIVATE CONVERSA-  
TIONS WITH DAYAN, SAID HE HAS THE IMPRESSION SADAT HAS  
BECOME "LESS INFLEXIBLE" WITH REGARD TO THE DECLARATION  
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OF PRINCIPLES AND, IF ISRAEL WOULD MAKE A GESTURE (CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES), THEN EGYPT COULD AND PROBABLY WOULD RECIPROCATE. ALTHOUGH DAYAN REBUTTED THIS NOTION, THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER APPARENTLY GAINED HOPE THAT ISRAEL COULD PERHAPS SHOW SOME MODERATION ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, ALTHOUGH NOT ON WITHDRAWAL. EVEN THOUGH NOT MUCH NEW WAS SAID IN THIS AREA AND SIMONET PROBABLY WAS NOT CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL IS BEING SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, HE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY DAYAN AND PERHAPS OTHERS TO TAKE A LESS CRITICAL LINE TOWARDS THE GOI.

7. INDICATIONS ARE THE GOI HAS BACKED OFF FROM ITS HARDLINE DISAPPROVAL OF ANY EUROPEAN "MEDDLING" IN THE REGION. LEROY GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS NOW MORE INTERESTED IN PERSUADING THE NINE THAN ATTACKING IT AND WOULD LIKE TO USE SUCH VISITS TO PRESENT THE ISRAELI CASE. HE FELT ISRAEL'S MOTIVE WAS TO LIMIT DAMAGE AND USE EUROPE AS A LEVER TO PRESSURE SADAT.

8. SIMONET AND DAYAN ALSO DISCUSSED SEVERAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. DAYAN ARGUED, AND SIMONET REPORTEDLY AGREED, THAT EUROPE HAS RENEGED ON ITS 1975 PROMISE FURTHER TO REDUCE THE TARIFF ON ISRAELI CITRUS. SIMONET EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION THAT ISRAEL HAS ALLOWED SABENA TO ADD AN ADDITIONAL FLIGHT PER WEEK BETWEEN TEL AVIV AND BRUSSELS. ISRAEL PRESSED SIMONET FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MIXED COMMISSION AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION. BUT SIMONET SUCCESSFULLY PUT OFF THIS ISSUE, PROBABLY TO AVOID CONFLICT OVER THE PRACTICE OF THE BELGIAN PRIVATE SECTOR OF COMPLYING WITH UNWRITTEN BOYCOTT PROVISIONS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE THERE IS LITTLE DESIRE BY BELGIANS TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN ISRAEL AT THIS TIME.

9. THE MEETINGS WERE ALSO ATTENDED ON THE ISRAELI SIDE BY THE DIRECTOR OF MFA'S EUROPE I DIVISION, ITZHAK MINERBI, WHO, ACCORDING TO LEROY AND OTHER SOURCES, IS TO BE THE NEXT ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM. LEROY SAID THAT HIS APPOINTMENT APPEARED TO BE A RECOGNIZED FACT BY THE GOI, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NOT YET BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE GOB. THE APPOINTMENT SHOULD BE WELL RECEIVED. THE BELGIAN EMBASSY HAS TOLD US THEY HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH MINERBI'S

INTELLIGENCE AND HAVE HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH HIM. THEIR ONLY RESERVATION HAS BEEN THAT THEY HAVE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHERE HIS PRIVATE JUDGMENT LEAVES OFF AND THE MINISTRY'S VIEWS BEGIN. THEY ARE NOT SURE WHETHER HIS CLEVERNESS IS PERHAPS A DISGUISE TO COVER THE FACT THAT HE IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED BY DAYAN. (WE HAVE ALSO BEEN IMPRESSED WITH HIS INTELLIGENCE; HE IS EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE AND CAN BE TOUGH AS NAILS WHEN HE DEEMS NECESSARY).

10. COMMENT: THE VISIT APPEARS TO HAVE SERVED BOTH ISRAEL AND SIMONET WELL. SIMONET RECEIVED A FAIR HEARING AND MANAGED AT THE SAME TIME TO IMPROVE THE BELGIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL, WHICH HAD SUFFERED SOMEWHAT BECAUSE OF HIS NOTE AND SOME BELGIAN POSITIONS CRITICAL OF ISRAEL WITHIN THE NINE.

11. WE WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY DAYAN'S FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE TOWARD SIMONET AND BELIEVE IT CAN BE EXPLAINED BY HIS DESIRE TO PRESENT ISRAEL'S CASE EFFECTIVELY AND THEREBY DEFLECT SOME OF SADAT'S PRESSURE ON THE NINE. ALTHOUGH THE GOI WOULD STILL TAKE OFFENSE OVER ANY NEW UNFAVORABLE EUROPEAN STATEMENTS, JERUSALEM'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF EXCHANGES SUCH AS RECENT VISITS BY CONFIDENTIAL

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THORN AND OWEN, REFLECT AN ISRAELI AWARENESS THAT THESE CAN BE BENEFICIAL IN EXPLAINING THE GOI POINT OF VIEW AND IN INFLUENCING EUROPEAN OPINION. VIETS

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PEPR, PGOV, OVIP, BE, IS, EEC, (SIMONET, HENRI)  
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